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ABSTRACT

These two volumes of a newsletter on English as A Second Language (ESL) literacy education provide articles on: "Health Literacy: Recognizing its Importance in ESL Instruction" (Kate Singleton) and "English That Works" (Brigitte Marshall). Both volumes offer interviews (one with an ESL teacher and one with an author who write about ESL issues). They also include news notes on such topics as English Literacy/Civics Education projects, 60 countries attending the 19th World Congress on Reading, and the soaring U.S. Hispanic Population. A resources update section describes new books, booklets, and Web sites related to ESL instruction. Each journal offers a book review. The two books are "In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd" (Ana Menendez) and "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America" (Barbara Ehenreich). (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.) (SM)

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NCLE *notes*

Volume 11 Number 1 Summer 2002

Volume 11 Number 2 Winter 2002-2003

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Vol. 11, No. 1 • Summer 2002

NCLEnotes

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Health Literacy: Recognizing Its Importance in ESL Instruction

Health literacy is defined by Harvard health literacy specialist Rima Rudd as the ability to use English to solve health-related problems at a proficiency level that enables one to achieve one's health goals and to develop health knowledge and potential. Rudd's definition addresses the significant linguistic and cultural obstacles that nonnative English speakers often encounter when seeking healthcare in the United States.

Needs and Responses

Patients today must be proactive and self-advocating. Technological and pharmacological advances in the medical field create multiple treatment options, and patients must make complicated decisions about their medical care.

Health professionals are responding in several ways to improve access to healthcare services for nonnative English speakers. Some are assessing patients' literacy levels, rewriting educational materials in plain language, and providing patients with oral and video instructions in addition to written materials. Written materials are being translated into other languages, and medical professionals are receiving cultural sensitivity training. Some healthcare facilities are also using certified medical interpreters.

Understanding Obstacles

- Adult English language learners (ELLs) often lack access to basic healthcare services due to language barriers, lack of insurance, lack of information on available low-cost services, or fear of jeopardizing their immigration status by utilizing such services.
- Because of their lack of English language skills, ELLs may be unable to formulate appropriate questions in a medical setting or comprehend basic instructions without an interpreter. Many immigrants use their children as interpreters. This creates problems for the adults who fear losing status with their children, for the healthcare professionals who must deal with a child rather than an adult, and for the children who are put in situations where they are expected to function as adults and to convey intimate health information about their parents.
- Some ELLs may lack an educational background in basic human physiology, which precludes comprehension of treatment information even with an interpreter's help.
- Unaware of the U.S. healthcare culture, adult ELLs often do not know what is expected of them as patients (preventive behaviors, treatment com-

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Her NCLE's Worth

NCLE *talks with Kate Singleton, ESL teacher for Fairfax County (Virginia) Adult Education and author of this issue's feature article on health literacy.*

Miriam Burt: Kate, how did you get interested in health literacy instruction for adult English language learners?

Kate Singleton: It started with my personal experience with the healthcare system. I had to work really hard to get appropriate care. At the same time, I saw that my students—particularly those at the very beginning level who had little education and even less English—were finding it impossible to access the care they needed.

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News Notes

English Literacy/Civics Education Projects Share and Plan

The English Literacy and Civics Education Program was announced in November 1999 by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). State and local organizations that were seeking to expand adult English literacy and civics instructional services could apply for 2-year grants. After a competitive review process, 12 organizations throughout the country were awarded grants, which are running from Spring 2000 through Summer 2002.

Some of the grant projects integrated English language learning and civics for unique populations, such as elderly immigrants, ex-offenders, and migrant workers. Working from a different perspective, other projects developed curriculums and teacher trainings that integrated English language and civics instruction.

In January 2002, the projects' staff members, selected state adult education representatives, and OVAE staff met to share information and updates on the projects. The 2-day conference provided an opportunity for all stakeholders involved in the program to share information, challenges, and insights and to plan their next steps. OVAE staff and state representatives presented news and information from their areas, heard concerns and issues from the field, and gathered information on the projects for further dissemination. Project staff outlined their projects, described successes and challenges, and presented products that have been developed.

To read the complete meeting summary and for information on the individual projects, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultED/ELCivics.

Don't Hide Your Light Under a Bushel!

Have you produced a paper, conference presentation, lesson plan, curriculum, research report, or program description/evaluation in language and literacy education for adults learning English? By contributing to one of the most visible and accessible sources of education information—the ERIC database—your work is made available to colleagues throughout the world.

NCLE collects and evaluates materials for the ERIC database. To submit your work, contact Lynda Terrill (lterrill@cal.org) or send a copy of the document and a completed ERIC Reproduction Release Form (downloadable at http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com/submitting.html#errp) to

Lynda Terrill
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For more information about ERIC, visit www.eric.ed.gov/.

OVAE Holds Public Meetings

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education will hold public meetings this summer to hear comments on the reauthorization of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). This is Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, the legislation that provides funding for adult education programs. For meeting dates and places visit the OVAE Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE.

DAEL Greets New Director

In June, the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy greeted Cheryl Keenan as its new director. Ms. Keenan was formerly director of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education at the Pennsylvania Department of Education and has been integral in shaping and implementing the new requirements in Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. In her new role, Ms. Keenan oversees the office that funds almost $600 million in state and local grant programs for adult literacy and high school completion.

English Literacy Learners on the Rise

English literacy learners accounted for 42% of all adult education participants in 2001, up 4% from the previous year. In 2002, an even greater increase is expected as a result of additional foreign residents learning English in order to apply for citizenship. The Immigration and Naturalization Service says applications for citizenship more than doubled immediately following September 11.

Health Literacy—Continued from page 1

pliance, proactive questioning, provision of medical history, and payment procedures) nor what they should expect of care providers (right to an interpreter, to have questions answered and information clarified, and to a second opinion).

- Culturally biased health materials can be another obstacle for ELLs. The 1993 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) results showed the majority of marginally literate adults to be white and native born. Many health education materials are culturally and idiomatically directed to this population, making the content less accessible to those from other backgrounds.

Meeting Challenges

- Instructors may find the personal nature of health discussions uncomfortable in their classes and may need to broaden their knowledge of the availability of health resources in their community. They can access information in the community by forming partnerships with health professionals. Information on insurance and other healthcare culture issues can also be found on the Internet.
- Teachers may be unfamiliar with their students' cultural beliefs on health issues. In the classroom, students should be given the choice whether or not to share personal stories and beliefs such as traditional health practices from their native culture.
- Instructors of students with minimal English literacy must select health materials carefully. Health education materials usually target adults with an eighth- to tenth-grade reading level. Many adults—both native and non-native English speakers—read significantly below these levels and thus have difficulty utilizing healthcare safely and effectively. If written information appropriate for students' reading levels is unavailable, the teacher can present information orally.
- Cartoons and illustrations from brochures and textbooks, especially those of isolated body parts, may be unclear or offensive to English language learners, especially to students with limited literacy in their native language. Teachers need to be aware of these issues and prepared to use other, more appropriate resources.

Conclusion

Adult English language learners face significant social, linguistic, and cultural obstacles to healthcare self-efficacy. Ensuring that learners have the literacy skills and cultural information necessary to access the proper care means specific training and lesson preparation for instructors, collaboration with healthcare providers, and recognition of the importance of health literacy by program administrators and funders. ■

This article is excerpted from the NCLE Q&A, Health Literacy and Adult English Language Learners, *written by K. Singleton (February 2002). The complete Q&A is available on NCLE's Web site (www.cal.org/ncle/digests/healthlitQA.htm) or in print (202-362-0700 x200; ncle@cal.org). The Q&A provides an extensive list of resources on the subject. Additionally,* Picture Stories for Adult ESL Health Literacy, *created by the author, is available at www.cal.org/ncle/health.*

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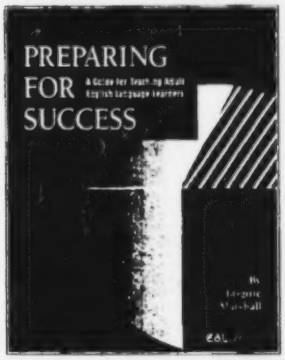
Resource Updates



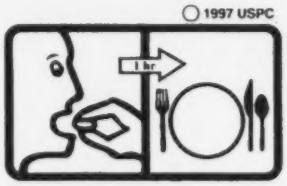
Recent legislation, including welfare reform initiatives and the Workforce Investment Act, underscore the demands being placed on education by the employment market. How can instructors working with adult English language learners respond to these demands and integrate employment participation skills into instruction? How can instruction be informed by initiatives such as the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and Equipped For the Future (EFF)? ***Preparing for Success: A Guide for Teaching Adult English Language Learners*** by Brigitte Marshall addresses these issues. The book is designed for teachers of adult English language learners at all levels and includes classroom activities and instructional resources.

Published by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems Co., Inc., *Preparing for Success* can be ordered online at the CALStore (www.cal.org/store) or through Delta Systems (800-323-8270; www.delta-systems.com).

The **Center for Southeast Asian Studies** at the University of Hawaii is offering over 2,000 photographs of Southeast Asia on its Web site (www.hawaii.edu/cseas/outreach/picarchive.html). During the summer of 2000, the outreach coordinator and a master's student in the Southeast Asian Studies program traveled to 10 Southeast Asian countries where they photographed scenes of daily life. Teachers and students are encouraged to download the images to use for educational purposes.

The **United States Pharmacopeia (USP)** is a nonprofit organization that establishes pharmaceutical standards for medications. It also strives to educate individual consumers and patients. One way it does this is through the **USP Pictograms**, graphic images that illustrate how to take and store medications and how to interpret precautions and important information about specific medications. The USP Pictograms can be used to reinforce printed or oral instructions and are useful in literacy and English language learning settings. The entire pictogram library (81 images) can be downloaded from www.usp.org/information/programs/pgrams/index.htm.

Take at bedtime



Take 1 hour before meals

La Leche League International and the Academy for Educational Development offer a series of six booklets on prenatal care and breastfeeding. Available in English or Spanish, the booklets are targeted to women with limited literacy in either language. They are written in a cartoon format with information portrayed through conversation and pictures. In each episode of the series, the main character, Kathy, moves through her pregnancy, learning about prenatal care and breastfeeding.

The booklets can be ordered through ERIC (800-443-3742; service@edrs.com; http://orders.edrs.com/Webstore/Express.cfm). Refer to ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED450008, ED450009, ED450010, ED450011, ED450012, and ED450013. For more information on La Leche League, visit www.lalecheleague.org.

"We all need to be housed. And beyond that we all aim to have a safe and loving place that reflects the best of who we are."

True to its mission of preparing adults for home ownership, the Fannie Mae Foundation, in collaboration with the Adult Literacy Resource Institute of Boston, Massachusetts, has recently published ***Money Management and Home-Buying Readiness: Sourcebook for Teachers of ESOL and ABE***. The *Sourcebook* is designed for adult-basic-education and English-as-a-second language teachers and program coordinators and administrators who are interested in implementing a home-buying readiness project into their curriculum. The book has four sections:

1. Getting Started: Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a Home-Buying Readiness Project
2. Supporting a Home-Buying Readiness Project: Fundraising and Resource Development (for program administrators)
3. Expanding Your Resources: Tools for Teachers
4. Appendices: Glossary; Free Resources; Literature With Themes of Home

To receive a free copy of the *Sourcebook*, call the Fannie Mae Foundation at 800-665-0012.

NCLE offers online resources

— on —

Adult ESL Statistics

Civics & English Literacy

Health Literacy & Adult ESL Instruction

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Her NCLE's Worth—Continued from page 1

MB: Did students know that this was a need they had?

KS: Absolutely. In the needs assessment I do at the beginning of each instructional cycle, getting a job and health are always the top two topics students want to explore.

MB: What are you teaching now?

KS: I'm teaching ESL workplace classes and designing a curriculum for Fairfax County adult English learners.

MB: Do healthcare issues come up in the ESL workplace classes?

KS: Yes, students come to me all the time with tricky problems and questions about healthcare. As their ESL teacher, I am one of their few points of contact for healthcare information.

MB: Dealing with health literacy necessarily means coming in contact with sensitive issues about students' lives. How do you set the boundaries between teaching English and dealing with these kinds of issues?

KS: Teachers tread a fine line here. The way I see it, we help our students by providing access to information and by letting them know there are options. For example, someone may not know that free clinics exist and that they live right by one. Maybe they don't understand that they can get help for mental issues and that there is probably less of a stigma about mental healthcare here than in their own countries. Also, many students have ruined their credit through nonpayment of medical bills, because they didn't know they could ask for a payment plan.

MB: So, you feel there are issues in healthcare literacy specific to English language learners? They have different instructional needs than native English speakers?

KS: Yes, although there are commonalities, the problems in healthcare are compounded for adult English language learners. Besides the reading problems, beginning-level English learners will not have the oral language to speak to or understand the healthcare provider. Then there are the cultural issues: Immigrant learners may not know what is expected of them regarding healthcare. They may not know that they are responsible for providing their health history

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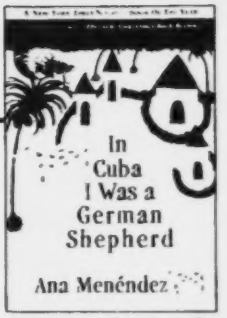
The Book Shelf



In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd by Ana Menéndez
2001, Grove Press, ISBN 0-8021-3887-X
Reviewed by Miriam Burt

In 1959, Fidel Castro led a successful revolt against the Cuban dictator, Juan Baptista. In the 40 plus years since then, hundreds of thousands of Cubans have left their island country, some with permission, many without. Many of the exiles have gotten no farther away than the 90 miles that took them to Miami, Florida, where they number about 700,000.

Ana Menéndez is the daughter of Cuban exiles in Miami. Her book, *In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd*, contains 11 stories that share some of the same characters and are related thematically: They all explore the sadness and pain of exile.

The title story is about Máximo, a retired restaurant owner who is part of a "generation of former professors [who] served rice and beans to the nostalgic" on 8th Street in Little Havana, Miami. His wife dead and his daughters moved away, he plays dominoes in the park with fellow Cuban exile Raúl and two Dominicans. Tourists come by and take pictures of them. Domino Park is, in fact, a stop on trolley tours where the microphone-amplified voice of the tour guide draws the attention of all within the park to the domino players, booming out that the Cuban exiles are a "slice of the past." Máximo hates this, feeling like an animal in the zoo.

Máximo tells jokes to his domino partners. His jokes have a bite that acknowledges the pain of never being really at home in the country he fled to in 1961, thinking he would return to his "row house of long shiny windows, the piano, the mahogany furniture" in 2 or 3 years' time. The Dominicans call him Professor and laugh at his jokes, but Máximo knows they don't understand all the "layers of hurt in the Cuban jokes." How can the Dominicans understand the specific pain Cuban exiles have faced every day for 40 years knowing that Castro is still in Cuba while they are still in Miami . . . the pain of knowing that no matter where the exiles are or who they become in the United States, they are not who they were in Cuba? Even Juanito, a "little insignificant mutt" in one of Máximo's jokes, maintains that in Cuba he was a German Shepherd.

The constant ache of knowing that one is no longer what one was surfaces over and over in the stories. In "The Story of a Parrot," a 60-year-old woman named Hortencia is reminded of her dreams of being an actress and singer. A vibrantly colored bird flies into her house one day, perches on lamps and china, and drinks from the kitchen tap. The intruder flaps its wings violently, dropping yellow and green feathers in its wake. Finally Hortencia and her husband shoo the bird out of the house. Initially, this disruption of her calm, ordered life upsets Hortencia greatly. A few days later, however, she regrets the parrot's leaving as she regrets her lost stage career, cut short in Havana before she came to the United States.

Although sympathetic to her characters, the author does not romanticize them. As this story's narrator, she speaks directly to Hortencia, telling her that she herself is responsible for her unfulfilled, gray life: "You could have joined the church choir. When you got to Miami, Mirta asked you to join and you said no. And what of the theater on 8th Street? [You could have been one of] the young kids full of dreams they still wore like golden armbands."

In the final story, "Her Mother's House," a second-generation Cuban exile journalist (perhaps representative of the author) looks for her mother's old plantation home during a visit to Havana and discovers how large the gap can be between memory and reality. This story ties together the themes of the book, including the inevitable separation of second- and third-generation exiles from the life of their parents and their Cuban roots and the disparity between what one remembers and what really was.

In *Cuba I Was a German Shepherd* has been translated into eight languages. This is not surprising. Máximo's feelings aside, loss and longing are not unique to Cuban Americans. The book speaks—or, given the beauty of the prose, actually sings—to all who have left their homes to start again in another country. In fact, one does not need to be an immigrant or interested in immigrants to appreciate this book. The stories will resonate with anyone who has thought about lost dreams and the passage of time. ■

Publications Order Form

New ERIC Digests From NCLE

Health Literacy and Adult English Language Learners

by Kate Singleton

This Q&A defines and discusses health literacy in light of special needs and concerns for adult English language learners, instructors, and programs. Health literacy activities for the classroom are described.

Issues in Accountability and Assessment for Adult ESL Instruction

by Carol Van Duzer

This Q&A presents the legislative background of current accountability requirements for ESL programs, issues in testing level gain, and critical questions whose answers can lead the field forward.

Fact Sheets

These concise fact sheets provide an overview of four current issues in the field of adult ESL and discuss their trends and best practices. Additional resources are suggested.

1 Assessment With Adult English Language Learners
2 Family Literacy and Adult English Language Learners
3 Professional Development and Adult English Language Instruction
4 Uses of Technology in Adult ESL Instruction

Using Music in the Adult ESL Classroom

by Kristen Lems

Music can be used to build listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills; increase vocabulary; and expand cultural knowledge. This digest offers strategies for incorporating music into the adult ESL classroom.

Beginning to Work With Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations

by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez and Miriam Burt

Written for practitioners who want an overview of what adult ESL teachers need to know, this Q&A discusses issues in adult learning, second language acquisition, teaching multicultural groups, and effective instructional approaches.

ERIC Digests (Free)

- ❑ **Health Literacy and Adult English Language Learners**
- ❑ **Issues in Accountability and Assessment for Adult ESL Instruction**
- ❑ **Reflective Teaching Practice in Adult ESL Settings**
- ❑ **Using Music in the Adult ESL Classroom**
- ❑ **Beginning to Work With Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations**
- ❑ **Library Literacy Programs for English Language Learners**
- ❑ **Dialogue Journals: Interactive Writing to Develop Language and Literacy**
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to the service provider and that they need to ask questions and be proactive. The printed materials they get may have examples or pictures that they can't understand or relate to.

MB: Speaking of drawings, you have developed some picture-story activities for health literacy [available on NCLE's Web site at http://www.cal.org/ncle/health]. Can you recommend other materials or offer tips to teachers of adult English language learners?

KS: My concern is for the learners with the least education and the least amount of English. They are the least likely to have insurance or any knowledge of healthcare in the United States. Consequently, they are more likely to have serious health problems. Health units in ESL texts usually only scratch the surface. I encourage teachers to look up information on the Web, to check out materials written in plain English, and then to develop their own materials, such as my picture-story activities. Three primary topics to cover are (1) the expectation of personal responsibility in healthcare, (2) the need for preventative healthcare, and (3) the health and social services available in the local community, especially for people of low income.

> ***"Getting a job and health are the top two topics students want to explore."***

MB: What about projects? Do you recommend doing them with English language learners?

KS: Projects are wonderful. However, beginning-level learners need to learn *basic* healthcare information before they can design a project on a topic of importance in healthcare.

MB: I understand that you have a project of your own that you're working on these days.

KS: Yes, I'm working on a master's degree in clinical social work.

MB: How do you plan to integrate clinical social work with your adult ESL teaching?

KS: I live with chronic health conditions myself and want to counsel people who have chronic illnesses. I also want to continue to develop materials that promote discussion about mental health issues for teachers working with immigrant learners. I want to help teachers to show their students that they do have choices in healthcare and that help is available.

MB: These are definitely areas of importance in health literacy and the ESL teaching field. Thank you, Kate, for talking with NCLE and sharing your insights. ■

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NCLEnotes

NATIONAL CENTER FOR ESL LITERACY EDUCATION www.cal.org/ncle

English That Works

Today in the class you said something important for me because I do it yesterday in my work. You'll said is a good idea take notes when somebody explain something to you. And that's what I did yesterday when my boss explained to me how to use the cash register. I telled her when I don't understand I'm confused to explain me again and I repeat to her what I understand to know if it's right or wrong.

—Vocational ESL Student

The author of this logbook entry has not learned all the grammar rules of English, but she has mastered skills that are more likely to result in success in the workforce than will a demonstration of perfect grammar. She has learned how to take notes, how to ask for clarification, and how to restate instructions.

Increasingly in the United States, adult English as a second language (ESL) instructors teach language as a means to an end—to help prepare students for success in the workforce and their communities. In the process, they must balance the needs of the learners, the employers, the community, and the funding agencies.

Behind current efforts to link language instruction to workforce and civic skills are several social forces:

1) Economic Shifts

The United States is shifting from an economy based on industry and manufacturing to one based on services and information. Higher skill levels are required in today's workforce, where new technologies demand higher literacy and math skills from job applicants.

2) Welfare Reform

Recent welfare reform legislation has pressured welfare recipients to find work and leave public assistance. Yet many welfare recipients lack the skills needed for jobs that lead to self-sufficiency. The jobs they get offer little opportunity for training and advancement. As a result, these individuals turn to adult education programs to provide the training they need to advance in the workforce.

3) Accountability Requirements

In 1998 the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) established accountability requirements for states receiving federal funds for adult education. The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) identifies five core outcome measures that meet the AEFLA requirements: educational gain, employment, employment retention, placement in postsecondary education or training, and receipt of a secondary school diploma or GED.

Using the NRS descriptors as guidelines, adult ESL programs assess learners at intake. After a predetermined amount of instruction, programs assess

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Her NCLE's Worth

NCLE's associate director Miriam Burt talks with Brigitte Marshall, administrator for Oakland, California, Adult Education. Ms. Marshall is the author of NCLE's recent book, Preparing for Success: A Guide for Teaching Adult English Language Learners *and this issue's feature article, "English That Works." A native of England, Ms. Marshall has gained recognition in the United States for her work integrating workplace skills with language instruction in employment preparation programs.*

Miriam: Brigitte, I know that you started your career in adult English lan-

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News Notes

60 Countries Attend 19th World Congress on Reading

NCLE's Associate Director Miriam Burt traveled to Edinburgh, Scotland, this summer to attend the International Reading Association's (IRA) 19th World Congress on Reading and the IRA's Multiple Language Literacy Symposium, held the day following the congress.

Approximately 1,000 educators from 60 countries attended the congress. Speakers held sessions covering nearly every facet of reading education. Ms. Burt, with Margarita Calderón of Johns Hopkins University, conducted a session on using students' native language to build background knowledge and skills while developing job-specific, interpersonal communication skills in English. Tying into this presentation was the closing summary of the symposium, in which David Klaus, consultant for the World Bank (United States), discussed recent international studies that suggest that using students' native language for initial instruction may result in better, faster, and easier second language acquisition.

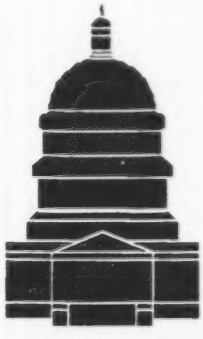
Also discussed at the closing summary was the CAL publication, *Enhancing Educational Opportunity in Linguistically Diverse Societies* (2001) by Nadine Dutcher. This report, which profiles educational programs in 13 countries that address the linguistic needs of minority language speakers, can be ordered or read online at http://www.cal.org/scripts/vcat/CatalogMgr.pl.

The proceedings from the symposium are expected to be published and shared with governments, private organizations, foundations, and others. The published paper will convey the symposium's cumulative ideas on what can and should be done in the area of multiple language literacy. Look for these proceedings on the IRA Web site in early 2003 at www.reading.org.

U.S. Hispanic Population Soars

The 2000 U.S. Census (www.census.gov) reveals that the Hispanic population in the United States increased by 58%—from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000. In the decade (1990–2000), half of all Hispanics lived in two states: California and Texas; the following top eight states were New York, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, New Mexico, Colorado, and Washington. About 44% of Hispanics lived in the West, 33% in the South, 15% in the Northeast, and 9% in the Midwest.

Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans were concentrated in different regions. The largest Mexican populations (more than a million) were in California, Texas, Illinois, and Arizona. The largest Puerto Rican populations (more than 250,000) were in New York, Florida, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. About two-thirds of all Cubans lived in Florida. The median age for Hispanics was 26 years.



Close to Home

Washington, DC, is home to the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE). Over 80,000 immigrants and refugees live in this area, making the city and its environs home also to the sixth largest concentration of newcomers in the nation.

Unlike cities such as Miami and Los Angeles, which have attracted largely Latino and Asian immigrants and refugees, Washington's newcomer population is diverse, representing more than 190 countries. Included in this population is the largest proportional flow of Africans to any single destination over the past decade: Africans comprise only 3.6% of newcomers nationwide but 16.2% of those settling in the national capital area.

More information about immigrants in the District of Columbia can be found in *The World in a Zip Code: Greater Washington, DC, as a New Region of Immigration* (www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/immigration/immigration.pdf). Published in 2001 by the Brookings Institutions Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, this report is based on data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service for the period from 1990–1998.

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NCLE's *Notes on the Staff*

Ave atque Vale!

NCLE is delighted to welcome Donna Moss as our new program associate. Donna comes to us from PBS, where she coordinated the LiteracyLink Civics project. Before that, she worked for many years as an ESL teacher/trainer/curriculum writer at the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) in northern Virginia. Donna is the mother of twin girls who are freshmen at Drew University in New Jersey. In her spare time, Donna enjoys swimming and fencing, which make her an energetic addition to the NCLE staff.

As happy as we are to greet Donna, we are equally sorry to say goodbye to MaryAnn Cunningham Florez. MaryAnn left NCLE in August to work with teachers in Fairfax County, Virginia, where she is the associate director of Adult ESL Instruction and works with David Red. (See the Winter 2000/2001 issue of *NCLEnotes* for a NCLE interview with David. [www.cal.org/ncle/Nnotes92.html].)

MaryAnn, as many of you know, was our Web coordinator and facilitated the NIFL-ESL listserv. Program Associate Lynda Terrill (another REEP alumna) has taken over these responsibilities. We wish MaryAnn the best in her new position, and we say

Ave, Donna! *Vale*, MaryAnn!

TESOL Seeks New Editor

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) invites applications for editor of ***TESOL Quarterly***. The journal's editor will serve a 5-year term: 1 year as associate to the current editor and the following 4 years as editor, with an annual honorarium of $4,000. The term begins January 2004.

TESOL Quarterly is a peer-reviewed journal with over 8,000 subscribers throughout the world. It provides a forum for TESOL professionals to share research findings and explore ideas and relationships within the field of second language teaching and learning. To apply or for more information, contact TESOL at

700 South Washington Street
Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel 703-836-0774
Email editorsearch@tesol.org
Web www.tesol.org

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NCLE*notes* is published twice yearly by the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) and is distributed free to individuals and organizations on NCLE's mailing list. *NCLEnotes* is also published on NCLE's Web site at **www.cal.org/ncle/**

Please address comments, suggestions, or materials for consideration to

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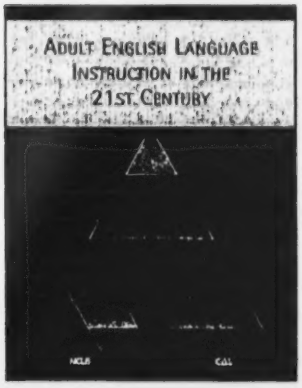
Washington, DC 20016-1859

Resource Updates

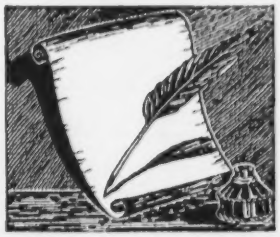
English language learners make up a significant segment of the adult education population in the United States. To meet the increased demand for English language instruction, existing adult education programs are expanding, and new ones are being established. ***Adult English Language Instruction in the 21st Century*** provides an overview of the field of adult English as a second language (ESL) instruction in the United States today. First, it places adult ESL in the broader context of the U.S. education system, and then it describes trends and issues in the areas of program design and instructional practice, assessment, teacher training and professional development, integration of research and practice, and technology.

The publication's intent is to give educators and education policy makers a clear view of where the field of teaching adult English language learners is today in order to build a more effective delivery system for the future.

Adult English Language Instruction in the 21st Century was researched and written by NCLE staff members Carol Van Duzer and MaryAnn Cunningham Florez. It will be available early 2003 and can be ordered online at www.cal.org/store.



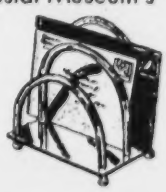
A full-text Spanish version of the publication, entitled ***La Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés para los Adultos en el Siglo XXI***, will soon be accessible on NCLE's Web site: www.cal.org/ncle.



Letters convey thoughts, ideas, expressions, and emotions. Sometimes there is nothing an individual who is separated from home and family treasures more than a letter from loved ones. **Letters From Home: An Exhibit-Building Project for the Advanced ESL Classroom** demonstrates the dynamic power of personal letters within the context of the adult ESL classroom.

Published by the National Postal Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, the project is designed to be flexible and can be adapted to meet the specific needs or goals of each classroom. The curriculum is divided into two main sections: In sessions 1–3, students discuss the value of letters from loved ones, read immigrants' letters from the past, and translate one of their own letters into English. In sessions 3–8, they share their experiences with each other and possibly the community by creating an exhibit of their own family letters. Students begin by discussing why it is important to share their personal and cultural history with others. Then they choose a theme for the exhibit, write exhibit labels that communicate the significance of their letters and the stories behind them, learn how to create a table or wall-mounted exhibit, and learn advertising strategies through publicizing their exhibit. **Letters From Home** encourages adult English learners to reflect on their shared experiences as immigrants and, at the same time, helps them continue building language skills.

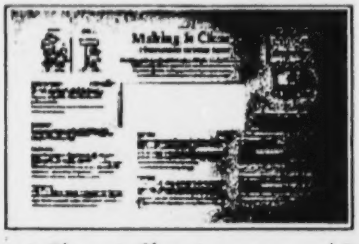
The 20-page booklets can be ordered at no cost from National Postal Museum, Education Department, 2 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20560-0570; Fax 202-633-9393. Order forms and additional information are located at the National Postal Museum's Web site: www.si.edu/postal/education/educationmaterials/lfhedu.html.



Unclear writing wastes time and confuses readers. The problem is magnified for those reading in English as a second (or third or fourth) language.

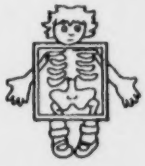
Making It Clear, published by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), is a 62-page handbook on writing and designing reader-friendly publications that are easy to understand and communicate clearly. The book includes handouts that can be duplicated. Although it is written particularly for union activists and staff who write employment-related materials, *Making It Clear* can be used by anyone who wants to write effectively.

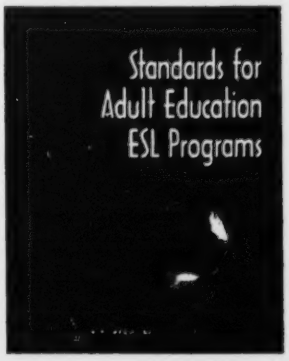
A companion to the handbook, ***Making It Clear: A Clear Language and Design Screen*** assists in the creation of a readable and attractive report, letter, manual, or other document. Side 1 provides pointers on appearance, such as line length, justification, type style and size, white space, and illustrations, as well as a 6 x 2-inch clear screen to view sample sections of the document. Side 2 provides questions to consider about audience, content, organizing material, word choice, sentence length, and so forth.



Making It Clear: A Clear Language and Design Screen comes laminated and is approximately the size of a placemat (17" x 11").

Both products are available from the Workplace Literacy Project, Canadian Labour Congress, Learning in Solidarity Series, 2841 Riverside Drive, Ottawa, Canada K1V8X7; www.clc-ctc.ca; 613-521-3400.





Providing quality ESL instruction for adult learners is the main goal of thousands of administrators and teachers in the field of adult education. But, *how* is a quality adult education ESL program established?

Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs answers this question by describing standards for program quality in nine areas:

1. program structure, administration, and planning
2. curriculum and instructional materials
3. instruction
4. learner recruitment, intake, and orientation
5. learner retention and transition
6. assessment and learner gains
7. employment conditions and staffing
8. professional development and staff evaluation
9. support services

These standards were developed by a diverse group of adult education ESL teachers, administrators, and researchers. Also included is a self-review instrument that helps programs measure continuous improvement. This book will be useful to adult education program directors or agencies setting up new ESL programs or reviewing existing ones.

Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs (2003) is published by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). To order, Tel 703-836-0774; Fax 703-836-6447; Email tesol@tesol.org; Web www.tesol.org.

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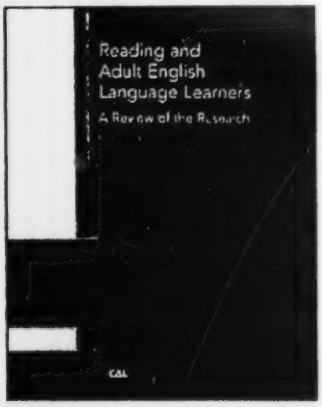
Resource Updates—Continuted from page 5



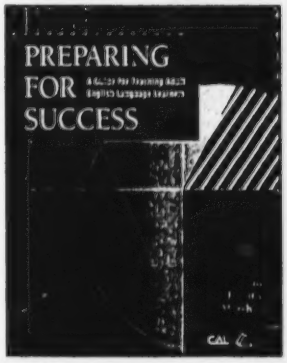
Learning to read in English is difficult for adult English language learners, and ESL instructors realize that there is no easy recipe to help their students become proficient readers. Teachers also know that adult learners in ESL literacy programs come from diverse backgrounds, have differing experiences with literacy in their first languages, and have various reasons for learning English.

NCLE staff members Miriam Burt and Joy Kreeft Peyton with Rebecca Adams of Georgetown University examined the research on adult English language learners reading English.

Reading and Adult English Language Learners: A Review of the Research summarizes this research, offers adult ESL teachers and administrators suggestions for practice, and points to areas where further research is needed. The book will be available in early 2003. Watch for it on the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Web site: www.cal.org/store.

How can instructors working with adult English language learners respond to the demands of policy makers and of the employment market without ignoring the needs and goals of the learners themselves? ***Preparing for Success: A Guide for Teaching Adult English Language Learners*** addresses this issue. Written by Brigitte Marshall, the interviewee in this issue's "Her NCLE's Worth" and author of the feature article, "English That Works," this book is for teachers of adult English language learners at all levels and includes classroom activities and instructional resources.

Published by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems, Co., Inc., ***Preparing for Success*** can be ordered online at the CALStore (www.cal.org/store) or through Delta Systems (800-323-8270).



Don't Hide Your Light Under a Bushel!

Have you produced a paper, conference presentation, lesson plan, curriculum, research report, or program description/ evaluation in language and literacy education for adults learning English? By contributing to one of the most visible and accessible sources of education information—the ERIC database—your work is made available to colleagues throughout the world.

NCLE collects and evaluates materials for the ERIC database. To submit your work, contact Lynda Terrill (lterrill@cal.org) or send a copy of the document and a completed ERIC Reproduction Release Form (downloadable at ericfac.piccard.csc.com/ submitting.html#errp) to

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English That Works—Continued from page 1

learners again. States have the option to use either a competency-based standardized test—such as the Basic English Skills Test (BEST); the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Life Skills Tests; or performance-based assessments—as long as the procedure is the same for all programs. (For more information on the BEST, see *NCLEnotes*, Vol. 9, No. 2 at www.cal.org/ncle.)

4) Learner Needs

In recent years, adult ESL education has developed the tools to assess learner needs and interests. Today, curriculum developers take into account the expectations not only of employers, funding agencies, and the community, but also those of learners and workers.

Workforce Skills

Leaders in today's workforce view successful workers as active, creative, and self-directed problem solvers who can work effectively on their own and with others. The adult ESL classroom is a natural place to develop these skills.

Classroom Simulations

Instructors can help learners develop workforce and civic skills by creating a learning environment that simulates situations in which these skills are used in the outside world. For example, if *food* is a topic of interest to learners, the instructor can teach the necessary language within the real-life context of making a budget and comparing food prices at different supermarkets in order to plan a reception.

Cooperative Learning

In cooperative learning, small groups of learners work together to accomplish a task, with each member playing a specific role. As learners interact, they seek and offer input, advocate and influence, negotiate, and teach one another—all valuable civic and workforce skills.

Project assignments allow students to learn independently and with others as they research, organize and interpret information, and communicate their findings. Students can use technology (e.g., the Internet and videos) to research and present their projects, developing information management and technology competencies. Information gathering and reporting activities, such as surveys, also promote independent learning and effective interaction skills in the classroom. A simple survey idea is "Who are you and where are you from?"

> ***"Leaders in today's workforce view successful workers as active, creative, and self-directed problem solvers."***

Classroom Management Techniques

Standards of expected behavior exist within every society, both in the workforce and in everyday interactions with individuals in the community. Through classroom management techniques, instructors can create an environment for English language learners that will help them achieve success in these contexts.

Rules and Routines

Classroom routines provide a context in which organizational skills, self-management, appropriate attitude, and personal responsibility can be modeled and practiced. Procedures and rules can be documented and displayed in the classroom, and learners can be asked to accept responsibility for informing new students about them.

Teamwork

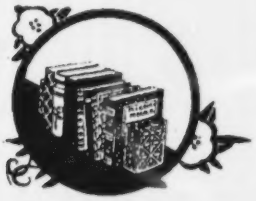
Creating teams to perform classroom maintenance tasks—such as erasing boards, turning off computers, and training new students—provides a real-life context for learners. Teams have duties and responsibilities with clear performance criteria. Job descriptions can be posted in the classroom or printed on cards and distributed to team members. In open-entry classes, where there are frequent arrivals and departures, learners can experience a typical workforce situation where team members train new employees or fill in for absentees.

Conclusion

Instructional activities and classroom management techniques provide opportunities for learners to develop workforce and civic competencies and to apply what they are learning to the reality of their everyday lives. A successful program produces outcomes that are responsive to the goals of all stakeholders, and in doing so, prepares students for success in the workforce and community.

This article is excerpted from the NCLE Brief, English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community, *by Brigitte Marshall. It can be downloaded at www.cal.org/ncle/digests/Englishwks.htm or ordered by calling 202.362.0700 x200 or emailing ncle@cal.org.*

The Book Shelf



Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America
By Barbara Ehrenreich
2001, Henry Holt, ISBN 0-8050-6389-7

Reviewed by Miriam Burt

"There are no secret economies that nourish the poor. On the contrary, there are a host of special costs. If you can't put up the two-month's rent you need to secure an apartment, you end up paying through the nose for a room you rent by the week."
(Ehrenreich, 2001, p. 27)

A study conducted by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University (retrieved from www.newsday.com, December 2, 2002), based on U.S. Census Bureau figures from 1990–2001, found that during this decade,

- Immigrants accounted for over half the growth of the nation's labor force, filling openings in factories and textile mills, restaurants, and other blue-collar industries;
- More than 22% of new immigrants worked in service occupations (e.g., housekeeping, food service, janitorial) compared to 19% of the total foreign-born population, and 13% of native–born workers;
- 13% of recent immigrants worked on assembly lines; and
- Immigrant families tended to have higher rates of poverty than those families headed by a U.S.-born resident.

What is work like for those holding entry-level jobs? From 1998–2000, during 2 years of "unparalleled prosperity" in the United States, journalist Barbara Ehrenreich went undercover to work at a series of entry-level jobs: In Florida she was a waitress, a nurses' aide, and a hotel maid; in Maine she was a house cleaner; in Minnesota she stacked clothes at Wal-Mart. She writes about her experiences and those of her co-workers—some of whom are immigrants—in *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Ehrenreich's account of her 2 years in minimum-wage jobs makes for a readable, often surprising, and sometimes shocking 200-page book.

Consider the experiences of George, a 19-year-old from the Czech Republic, who works as a dishwasher at a restaurant in Florida where the author works as a waitress. When Ehrenreich meets George, he has been in the country for only a week. Dishwashers at Jerry's restaurant make $6 an hour; however, George takes home only $5 an hour, because the agent who got him the job (and helped him get to the United States) keeps $1 of every $6 that he earns. How does George manage on this salary? Ehrenreich writes, "[George] shares an apartment with other Czech 'dishers' as he calls them, and he cannot sleep until one of them goes off for his shift, leaving a vacant bed." Unfortunately, George's future at Jerry's is in doubt, because he is accused of stealing from the dry-storage bin. But he will not be fired until a new dishwasher is hired to replace him. Ehrenreich quits her job before finding out George's fate.

Ehrenreich also works as a hotel maid while working at Jerry's. (One cannot live on only one minimum-wage job.) The young immigrant maids from Poland and El Salvador hurry to finish their rooms by 2:00—they probably have other jobs or an ESL class to go to. Carlie, a middle-aged American, doesn't understand this way of working. Maids are paid by the hour, after all, so Carlie drags out her work each day until after 6:00. A few months later, after moving to Maine, Ehrenreich hears that the hotel has switched to paying the maids by the room. Although in this case the change benefits the immigrant workers, situations like this often create misun-

derstandings, discord, and conflict among workers of different backgrounds and with different goals.

Teaching Ideas

If I were training ESL teachers, I would have them read the sections of the book described in this review and then brainstorm what they show about U.S. culture in general and workplace culture specifically. I would ask the teachers to comment on how they might use this information to inform their teaching.

If I were teaching a class of upper-intermediate level or advanced English language learners, I would excerpt the sections from the book about George and the hotel maids. I might give the learners a group problem-solving activity where they would try to come to a consensus on what George should do if he is fired. We would also discuss the case of the fast-working immigrant maids and how situations like this can lead to ill will and misunderstandings among workers.

Many other sections in the book are also relevant for both ESL teachers-in-training and students to read and discuss and to create problem-solving and other activities around.

Even if you don't use this book as a text with teachers or students, I suggest that you read *Nickel and Dimed* for yourself. You'll never again look at waitresses, dishwashers, maids, and other minimum-wage workers the same. And you'll appreciate a little more your students' relentless efforts—as they arrive to class fresh from quick showers, smelling of soap and cologne—to sandwich the important task of learning English between two or more jobs.

Problem-Solving Activities for Adult English Language Learners

Problem-solving activities are beneficial to adult English language learners in many ways: The *exercises* provide practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and at the same time, facilitate development of workforce and civic skills such as negotiating, offering input, advocating, and coming to a consensus. Cultural information about the United States is often presented through the *readings*.

A helpful resource for problem-solving activities or for ideas on creating your own activities is ***Problem Solving: Critical Thinking and Communication Skills*** by L. W. Little and I. A. Greenberg (1991, Longman, ISBN 0-8013-0603-5; available: www.amazon.com). In this textbook, learners follow these steps for each reading:

1. Talk about pictures that accompany the reading and predict what the article or story will be about.
2. Read the story silently, underlining unknown words to look up or discuss later in class.
3. Answer comprehension questions about the story orally and/or in writing.
4. Discuss the story, prompted by questions that ask learners to compare their own experiences in a new country and culture with those in the story.
5. In small groups, identify and discuss possible solutions for the problem portrayed in the story and come to a consensus on the best solution.

Another resource for using problem-solving activities with adult English language learners is ***A Day in the Life of the González Family*** by C. Van Duzer and M. Burt (1999, McHenry, IL: Delta Systems; available at www.cal.org/store).

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Her NCLE's Worth—Continued From page 1

guage instruction working with refugees overseas. Can you tell us about that?

Brigitte: I taught EFL [English as a foreign language] for a year in Europe. Then, I went to Pakistan as a research assistant and visited the refugee border camps. This changed my life. The research I was doing at that time did not seem socially useful, at least not directly, so I went back to England and worked at a refugee center in Oxford for a year.

I became immersed in my work, and while I was there, I met someone who had worked at a refugee camp in Thailand. Inspired, I got my ESL teaching credential and went to Thailand as a volunteer. I taught at the refugee-processing center in Phanat Nikhom, working for a local Thai organization. This is where I first met the Hmong people.

[Editor's note: In Phanat Nikhom, Thailand, from 1981–1995, refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam were given English, cultural orientation, and pre-employment classes before leaving for Australia, Canada, and the United States. Refugee camps were also located on the Bataan peninsula in the Philippines and Galang Island in Indonesia.]

Miriam: How did you eventually come to the United States?

Brigitte: The Hmong refugees were leaving Thailand for Fresno. I wanted to know what life would be like for them in the central valley of California. So after a year in Thailand, I went to Fresno to see the resettlement experience. This was in 1989. Many refugees had children who had been born and raised in camps. I did fact finding for about 4 months. Then, in January 1991, I was offered a job as program specialist for Fresno City College. I became so involved in my work that I decided to stay.

> ***"Visiting the refugee border camps changed my life . . ."***

Miriam: You have been very involved in integrating language with workplace and community skills. Did you become interested in this while you were in Fresno?

Brigitte: Yes, I was working with a youth employment program in Fresno in 1992, when I discovered the SCANS competencies. The entire youth program was built on the competencies. I designed instruction for the SCANS (both ESL and non-ESL). I saw that they could be applied beyond the workplace.

Simultaneously, I was working in adult ESL. There was disagreement between the teachers focused on a work-first approach and the adult ESL teachers. The ESL teachers did not just want to "shovel" students into jobs. They wanted to help improve their students' skills in order for them to be successful on the job and in other areas of their lives.

For more information on the SCANS, read the NCLE brief by Brigitte Marshall, English That Works: Preparing Adult English Language Learners for Success in the Workforce and Community *at www.cal.org/ncle/digests.*

Miriam: So this is the origin of your work with the integrative approach, with preparing students for success in the workforce and in the community while improving their English language skills?

Brigitte: Yes. Language instruction for those who want to work, are working, or are looking for higher level jobs is not a linear approach, but an integrative one: The experience of working and learning at the same time—the two go hand in hand.

Miriam: You were also an adult ESL specialist for the California State Department of Education, where you worked hard to integrate civics with ESL instruction for the state. How did you do this?

Brigitte: We used the EL/Civics grant money to develop a coordinated program that we hoped would improve the quality of ESL instruction in general. To some extent, I believe this has happened. The system includes doing an assessment of learner needs, identifying priority competencies, delivering instruction, and testing what you've taught. We invited people to focus on new ways of teaching, including using technology to deliver instruction, while emphasizing innovation. It is very exciting for me now to be hearing anecdotally from practitioners that they are building instruction around documented needs of students. We often lose sight of this—that we're doing this to help the students—in our haste to generate benchmarks.

Miriam: Recently, you have become the principal of Adult Education for Oakland County, California.

Continued on page 12

Publications Order Form

New From NCLE

Proceedings of the National Symposium on Adult ESL Research and Practice
by NCLE Staff

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), with the assistance of NCLE, convened a national symposium for adult ESL educators on September 4–7, 2001 (See *NCLENotes*, Winter 2001/2002, www.cal.org/ncle/Nnotes102.pdf). Participants shared ideas, heard from researchers and expert practitioners, and discussed recent initiatives on adult ESL education.

Issues addressed included opportunities and challenges in adult ESL instruction, reading research, project-based learning, immigration trends, ESL learners with special needs, assessment, the National Reporting System, assessment, professional development, and distance learning.

The proceedings will be available on NCLE's Web site in January 2003.

❑ **English That Works**
by Brigitte Marshall

This brief discusses how ESL educators can integrate workforce and civic skills into their curricula and convey workplace and community skills to their students through learner-centered instructional strategies and classroom management techniques.

❑ **ESL for Incarcerated Youth**
by Margo Delli Carpini

This Q&A discusses the issues and challenges of providing English instruction to incarcerated youth and suggests best practices and models to provide this intervention.

Did you know . . .

•that NCLE currently has 82 Digests and Q&As online?

•that many directly address the topic of workplace ESL instruction, i.e., integrating language learning with workforce skills development?

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- ❑ Improving ESL Learners Listening Skills: At the Workplace and Beyond
- ❑ Integrating Employment Skills into Adult ESL Instruction
- ❑ Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs
- ❑ Union-Sponsored Workplace ESL Instruction
- ❑ Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs
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Her NCLE's Worth—Continued From page 10

Brigitte: Yes, I am principal of two adult schools in the Oakland area. All 46 of the teachers at one school and 34 of the 42 teachers at the other school are ESL teachers. The other 8 instructors teach ABE [adult basic education], GED, or vocational education classes. Together, we serve approximately 10,000 students each year.

Miriam: What is your focus in this new job?

Brigitte: Since most of the students are English language learners, I am focusing on the ESL program first. I'm working on creating a clear vision with course outlines, needs assessments, and assessment procedures. Every year teachers submit a course outline in which they identify objectives. This is good, but nowhere do they ask what students want to learn.

The first step in planning a class is to conduct a learner needs assessment. I have invited teachers to challenge their assumptions about what they teach. I am encouraging teachers to find out from students what they want to learn in terms of content and language skills.

Miriam: Has this been successful?

Brigitte: We've just started working on this initiative together, but some teachers have been excited to start exploring the idea of needs assessments as the basis for designing classroom content. For example, one teacher changed her class plan based on the information she had received from her needs assessment. She said to me, "They wanted more practice in listening."

Miriam: What challenges do you face as principal of programs with 10,000 adult learners?

Brigitte: One of the biggest challenges is space. We own one building, lease several others, and offer classes at many different community and elementary school locations. We are here, there, and everywhere.

Also, we want to expand our ABE and vocational education programs within a year or so.

Another challenge is limited technology. Most of the computers we have are old, and maintaining them is a problem. We're working on developing a sustainable technology plan. We want to grow mindfully.

Miriam: What do you look forward to doing as principal of adult education for Oakland?

Brigitte: Working with the fabulous teachers. The teachers here are a well kept secret. I'm looking forward to showcasing them as we build a program that is worthy of their skills and talents.

I love this job. I believe the way I like to work can be effective here. I look forward to coming to work every day.

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ERIC Digests and Q&As on teaching ADULT ESL are available in full text on NCLE's Web site

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